

**WORK SESSION  
MINUTES**

The Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council was in the Council Chambers and called to order at 7:30pm. Adequate notification was published in the official newspaper of the Borough of Montvale. Roll call was taken.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT**

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to The Bergen Record informing the public of the time and place according to the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

**ROLL CALL:**

Councilmember Arendacs  
Council President Cudequest  
Councilmember Koelling

Councilmember Lane  
Councilmember Roche  
Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang

Also Present: Mayor Mike Ghassali; Borough Attorney, Dave Lafferty; Borough Engineer, Nick Chelius and Municipal Clerk, Fran Scordo

**ORDINANCES:**

*None*

**MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC**

**Agenda Items Only**

*A motion to open the meeting to the public for agenda items only by Council President Cudequest; seconded by Councilmember Koelling – all ayes*

***No public comment***

**MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC**

**Agenda Items Only**

*A motion to close the meeting to the public for agenda items only by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest – all ayes*

**MINUTES:**

**December 30, 2025**

*A motion to accept the minutes by Council President Cudequest; seconded by Councilmember Roche - all ayes with the exception of Councilmembers Arendacs abstaining*

**Sine Die January 1, 2026**

*A motion to accept the minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes*

**Re-Org January 1, 2026**

*A motion to accept the minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes*

January 8, 2026

*A motion to accept the minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes with the exception of Councilmembers Roche and Russo-Vogelsang abstaining*

Budget Meeting January 5, 2026

*A motion to accept minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest – all ayes with the exception of Councilmember Roche abstaining*

Budget Meeting January 12, 2026

*A motion to accept minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest – all ayes*

**CLOSED/EXECUTIVE MINUTES:**

*None*

**RESOLUTIONS: NON-CONSENT**

*None*

**RESOLUTIONS: (CONSENT AGENDA\*)**

All items listed on a consent agenda are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Borough Council and will be approved by a motion, seconded and a roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Council member(s) so request it, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

**48-2026 A Resolution Appointing William Betesh, Esq. Of Boggia, Boggia & Betesh to Represent the Borough of Montvale In Tax Appeal Matters Pending As of December 31, 2025**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Resolution 23-2026, the Governing Body of the Borough of Montvale (“Borough”) appointed David S. Lafferty, Esq. of Huntington Bailey, L.L.P. Borough Attorney for the 2026 calendar year; and

**WHEREAS**, as of December 31, 2025, William Betesh, Esq. of the law firm of Boggia, Boggia & Betesh was appointed as Borough Attorney for the Borough of Montvale, including representation of the Borough in tax appeals and matters before the New Jersey Tax Court;

**WHEREAS**, the Borough has determined that the law firm of Boggia, Boggia & Betesh should continue its representation of the Borough for tax appeals pending as of December 31, 2025;

**WHEREAS**, the anticipated term of this Contract is from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026 not to exceed \$25,000; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:111 et seq.) requires that the Resolution authorizing the award of Professional Service contracts without competitive bids and the Contract itself must be available for public inspection;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Governing Body of the Borough of Montvale, County of Bergen, in the State of New Jersey that the office of Boggia, Boggia & Betesh will continue to represent the Borough of Montvale in the following tax appeals pending as of December 31, 2025:

- Life Time Fitness
- Fintan Seeley
- PRM Hospitality
- Toll NJ, LLC
- Pranay Aiya
- Hornrock Properties

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Mayor and Municipal Clerk of the Borough of Montvale are hereby authorized and directed to execute a contract with Boggia, Boggia & Betesh; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that William Betesh, Esq., shall complete and submit a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certifies that he has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Borough of Montvale in the previous one year, and that the contract shall prohibit William Betesh, Esq from making any reportable contributions through the term of this contract; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Contract is awarded without competitive bidding as a "Professional Service" in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law because the services are to be performed by a person authorized by law to practice a recognized profession and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Business Entity Disclosure Certification and the Determination of Value shall be on file with this Resolution; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that David S. Lafferty, Esq. will represent the Borough of Montvale in any tax appeal matters filed on and after January 1, 2026.

#### **49-2026 Mutual Aid Plan & Rapid Deployment Force Interlocal Service Agreement**

**WHEREAS**, the police departments in Bergen County have a day-to-day responsibility to provide for the security of lives and property, for the maintenance and preservation of the public peace and order; and

**WHEREAS**, Law Enforcement Officials also have a responsibility to provide for preparedness against natural emergencies, such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, major storms, etc., manmade causes, civil unrest, and civil disobedience such as riots, strikes, jail or prison riots, train wrecks, aircraft crashes, major fires, ethnic disorders, riots, terrorist incidents and bombings, state and national emergencies; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bergen County Police Chiefs Association has proposed a Mutual Aid Plan and Rapid Deployment Force to deal with these emergencies; and,

**WHEREAS**, this Plan is adopted in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:14-156, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-156.1, N.J.S.A.40A:14-156.4 AND N.J.S.A. App A:9-40.6; and

**WHEREAS**, this Plan will provide a uniform procedure for the coordination of the requesting, dispatching, and utilization of law enforcement personnel and equipment whenever a local law enforcement agency requires mutual aid assistance from any other jurisdiction, both contiguous and non-contiguous, in the event of an emergency, riot or disorder, in order to protect life and property; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the desire of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale to participate in a Mutual Aid Plan and Rapid Deployment Force in accordance with the plan submitted by the Bergen

County Police Chiefs Association.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale that the Police Department of the Borough of Montvale, under the direction of the Chief of Police, cooperate with the Bergen County Police Chiefs Association to create an Interlocal Services Agreement with all municipalities in the County of Bergen in order to put into place the Mutual Aid Plan and Rapid Deployment Force; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the County Executive, the Board of County Commissioners, the County Prosecutor, the County Chief of Police, and all Bergen County Municipalities.

**50-2026 Authorizing Hiring Christopher Collova, Part-Time Fire Inspector for the Fire Prevention**

**WHEREAS**, Christopher Collova meets the qualifications for the position of Fire Inspector and agrees to the terms and conditions of employment, and has previously completed a satisfactory background investigation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Christopher Collova shall be paid pro-rata based on an annual salary of \$10,545 with a work week of 7 hours.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, that the above named individual is hereby appointed to the above position effective February 2, 2026

**51-2026 A Resolution Authorizing the Receipt of Bids for Towing Services**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Montvale's current contract for Police Towing Services with Bergen Brookside Towing expires on April 30, 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Montvale has a need to obtain the services of an appropriately-licensed contractor to provide Towing Services in the Borough of Montvale upon the expiration of the current contract; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough is therefore desirous of formally soliciting bids for this work in accordance with the procedures set forth in the *Local Public Contracts Law*.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale that the Borough Clerk is hereby authorized to receive bids for the above-referenced project in accordance with the *Local Public Contracts Law* and pursuant to the revised bid documents prepared by the Borough Attorney.

**52-2026 A Resolution Awarding a Contract to Liberty Parks & Playgrounds for a Steelworx Gable Pavilion for Huff Park Pursuant to ESCNJ Contract 24/25-01**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough has a need to procure the necessary materials and labor to install a new 30' x 34' pavilion in Huff Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough did solicit a proposal from Liberty Parks & Playgrounds pursuant to ESCNJ Contract 24/25-01, Playground Equipment; and

**WHEREAS**, Liberty did submit two proposals dated January 14, 2026, for the pavilion including optional tongue and groove ceiling, and all labor and materials necessary for site preparation, pouring the concrete foundation and installation of the pavilion, in the total amount of \$142,735.09; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 11 of the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11, the Borough is a member of a cooperative pricing system for the provision of goods and services with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey ("ESCNJ"), formerly known as the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough is desirous of entering into a contract through ESCNJ with Liberty for the above-described goods and services, as set forth in the two January 14, 2026 proposals attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and

**WHEREAS**, any and all contracts entered into pursuant to this resolution shall remain subject to review and approval as to form by the Borough Attorney; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Financial Officer has certified that funds have been appropriated and are available for this purpose.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Borough of Montvale does hereby award the above-referenced contract pursuant to ESCNJ 24/25-01, as follows:

| <b>Vendor</b>               | <b>Contract Amount</b>                                    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Liberty Parks & Playgrounds | \$129,169.09 (base model plus installation)               |
| P.O. Box 52                 | <u>\$13,566.00 (optional tongue &amp; groove ceiling)</u> |
| Stratford, NJ 08084         | <b>\$142,735.09 (total)</b>                               |

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mayor, Borough Clerk, and all other appropriate officials, officers and employees are hereby directed, authorized and empowered to take all steps necessary to effectuate the provisions and purposes of this resolution.

**53-2026 Approval of Annual Renewal of Business Permit for Massage and Bodywork Establishment – Cozy Thai Spa – 2 S. Kinderkamack Road**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Chapter 258-3 of our Borough Code a Massage and Bodywork Therapy Establishment must apply for a business permit; and

**WHEREAS**, Cozy Thai Spa submitted all required documents to the Borough Clerk which have been reviewed and approved; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that they Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale authorize the Borough Clerk to issue a renewal business permit for a fee of \$550.00 to Cozy Thai Spa; and

**54-2026 Authorize Budget Transfers Between Appropriation Accounts Pursuant To N.J.S.A. 40a:4-58**

**WHEREAS**, certain transfers of funds for various 2025 budget appropriations are necessary to cover anticipated expenditures; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58 provides for the transfer of appropriations with excess over and above the amount deemed necessary to fulfill their purposes to those appropriations considered to be insufficient; and

**WHEREAS**, the appropriations subject to fund transfers hereby are not within those restricted by N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58 for transfer purposes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor & Borough Council of the Borough of Montvale, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, that the Chief Financial Officer shall and is hereby authorized to make transfers between appropriations accounts of the 2025 Municipal Budget as follows:

|                                                        | <b>FROM</b> | <b>TO</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Administration and Executive Salaries & Wages          | \$5,600     |           |
| STATUTORY EXPENSES<br>Social Security System (O.A.S.I) |             | \$5,600   |
| Construction Official OE<br>Other Expenses             | \$3,050     |           |
| Construction Official<br>Salaries & Wages              |             | \$2,800   |
| Electrical Subcode Official<br>Salaries & Wages        |             | \$250     |
| UTILITIES<br>Electricity                               | \$12,000    |           |
| Fire Hydrant Service                                   |             | \$12,000  |
|                                                        |             |           |

**BOROUGH OF MONTVALE****JANUARY 27, 2026**

|                                                |          |          |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|                                                |          |          |
| Administration and Executive<br>Other Expenses | \$20,000 |          |
| Legal Services & Costs<br>Other Expenses       |          | \$20,000 |
| UTILITIES<br>Telephone                         | \$6,050  |          |
| Police Dispatch (Tri-Boro)<br>Other Expenses   |          | \$6,050  |

***Introduced by: Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Arendacs - a roll call was taken - all ayes***

**BILLS: Municipal Clerk read the Bill Report**

*Motion to pay bills by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang - all ayes*

**ENGINEER'S REPORT: Nick Chelius**

*No Report*

**ATTORNEY REPORT: Dave Lafferty**

*No Report*

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Joe Voytus**

*No Report*

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

*None*

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Mayor Ghassali mentioned about forming a facilities committee regarding all 11 municipal buildings; Councilmembers Arendacs and Roche will lead the committee along with the borough engineer and Facilities Manager, Chris Gruber*

**COMMUNICATION CORRESPONDENCE:**

*None*

**MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:****HEARING OF CITIZENS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:**

Upon recognition by the Mayor, the person shall proceed to the floor and give his/her name and address in an audible tone of voice for the records. Unless further time is granted by the Council, he/she shall limit his/her statement to five (5) minutes. Statements shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof. No person, other than the person having the floor, shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, without recognition by the Mayor.

*A motion to open meeting to the public by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest – all ayes*

*No Public Comment*

*A motion to close meeting to the public by Councilmember Koelling; seconded by Councilmember Roche – all ayes*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Motion to adjourn by Councilmember Koelling; seconded by Councilmember Roche – all ayes*

*Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm*

Regular Meeting of the Mayor & Council will be held at 7:30pm on Thursday, February 12, 2026

***Respectfully submitted, Frances Scordo, Municipal Clerk***